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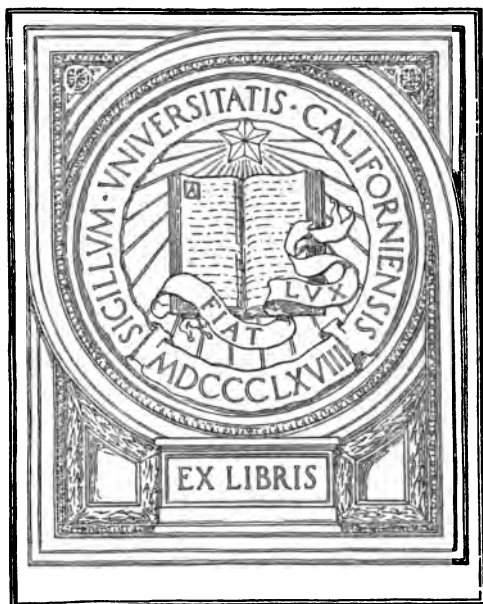
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*From the Author to  
the Editor*

**BLACK BALL'S  
VALÈ,**

OR THE

**FAREWELL ADDRESS**

OF A

**THEATRICAL**

**Shoe Black and Cobler,**

ON

**HIS LEAVING A CERTAIN COLLEGE,**

IN

**A CERTAIN ENGLISH UNIVERSITY.**

**LONDON:**

**PRINTED BY D. JAKES, LOWER REGENT STREET,**

**1818.**



THE  
AMERICAN  
MUSEUM OF  
NATURAL HISTORY

RW

# BLACK BALL'S

VALE,  
GIVEN OF  
CALIFORNIA

VOS, VALETE ET PLAUDITE.

---

**S**TAY, masters—'twill be long before  
Another hearing I implore—  
One moment—for the next may sever  
The master and the man for ever.  
Hear me, kind mistress o' the kitchen—  
Queen o' the buttery—the which in,  
With help of culinary things,  
I've acted centuries of kings.  
The play being nearly ended, don't  
Deny me—but I'm sure you w'not—

M84820

That gracious smile, that kind applause,  
Which, when the mimic hist'ry draws  
T'wards its conclusion, ev'ry hearer.

Is wont to give ; for none sincerer  
Than I, I'll venture to maintain,  
Ever besought your confidence to gain.

How frequently, in feigned show,  
Of madness, pleasure, or of woe,  
Have I consum'd your tedious while,  
And witnessed your approving smile !

But now, when I do really feel,  
And wou'd in honesty reveal  
Those very passions, which, so late  
In mimicry I cou'd dilate ;

I find my faculty but weak,  
And my tongue powerless to speak :

So, Hamlet, in the latter act  
Of his wild hist'ry, was in fact

Mistaken, when he wonder'd, how  
The players, cou'd distinctly show

The various passions, that, combin'd  
 To work upon the human mind,  
 When, chance, they never felt the sense,  
 But play'd throughout in vague pretence.  
 ' But,' said the Danish prince, ' had they  
 Those cues and reasons, which, do prey  
 On me within, they'd drown the stage  
 With tears, and with a juster rage  
 The guilty and the free appall,  
 Eyes, ears, and ev'ry sense enthral.'  
 Yet, my good masters, if I may,  
 From mine own, others' natures weigh;  
 I shou'd with little doubt conclude,  
 That, these same mimic heroes, wou'd  
 The more effectively express  
 That, which, they feign'd, than, that, they did  
 possess.

But, farewell all! and O! forgive a  
 Tear at departing—Then, for ever,  
 Farewell, the jolly mind! Alas!  
 The well-corked bottle, and big glass,

*Ned Rawlins'* steed, and all, farewell,  
 That make a College bearable !  
 The spirit-stirring rows, that go on—  
 The royal bumper toasts, and so on—  
 Ride, romp, and fun from other causes !  
 And O, ye jolly dogs, whose voices  
 E'en ' the immortal Jove's dread clamour  
 Counterfeit'—or a blacksmith's hammer,  
 Farewell ! Poor Black Ball's occupation  
 Has met its final destination !

Humble, my calling here, 'tis true—  
 And yet, methinks, some praise is due  
 To him, whose task it is assign'd  
 To polish up the lowest kind :  
 To brighten that, which, ne'er was found  
 In duty, but upon the ground :  
 To keep that very same thing neat  
 That, people trample under feet :  
 To give a gloss to that, which, wou'd  
 The moment after, kiss the mud :

In short, he surely hath some dues,  
 Who, polishes your *boots and shoes*.  
 Such is my duty—but you will  
 Allow, I'm worthier to fill  
 A loftier station—not that I  
 Wou'd in the least degree imply  
 That, blacking shoes, or cobbleing,  
 To which, I am a middleing  
 Successful hand, be base or low—  
 Quite the reverse, as I shall show—  
 But, my kind gentlefolks, I mean,  
 I'm fitter for the tragic scene ;  
 To glitter in the spangled tunic ;  
 To wield the sceptre histrionic ;  
 For well ye know, how, after hall  
 At ev'ning, I obey your call ;  
 With hearth-brush in my girdle, for  
 Want of a better scymitar ;  
 First, in the person of Macbeth,  
 I stare aghast at Duncan's death ;

I ope my hand, which, truly might  
 A bolder than Macbeth affright ;  
 For, you remember, while he cries  
 Appall'd — ' O they pluck out mine eyes !'  
 He looks upon his hands, all—ruddy—  
 That's for my rhyme, the right word's, bloody—  
 But I, by far a blacker felon,  
 All over daub'd with classic ΑΙΜΑ ΜΕΛΑΝ.\*

In Hamlet too, I'm pretty able—  
 As far as dress may go—in *sable*—  
 My apron, smalls—in truth I call 'em  
 ' My customary suits of solemn  
 Black'—but a frequent imputation  
 Is cast on me, of innovation ;  
 For, as my calling it may suit,  
 Perhaps some word I substitute—

---

\* The colour, which, approaches, perhaps, the nearest to that signified by Homer, is of the dark flowing of the ripe grape ; probably better understood, (at any rate, by the Society in question,) by the name of *red Port wine*.

But right synonymous for other—  
 'Tis not my *blackening coat*, good mother—  
 Besides it is a bad word—inky—  
 Mine's far more suitable—what think ye?  
 Yet, I'm at loss for such a host;  
 A mother, uncle, cousin, ghost;  
 For, since I recollect, Black Ball  
 Never had any kin at all:  
 But what is rather odd, I ween,  
 Hamlet the Dane, and me, between,  
 Is, that, he had all things in life,  
 Both great and small, except a wife—  
 Unless, the gentle Ophelia  
 Did indeed—but I'll not belie her:  
 Now, rather than the prince should make  
 His mistress, wife, for Black Ball's sake;  
 I wou'd as lieve Ma'am Ball be Mistress—  
 But sure, I shou'd not feel that distress  
 When the time came, that, she'd be found  
 Under a weeping willow, drown'd;



For her, Black Ball wou'd ne'er exert his  
 Art pugilistic, with Laertes :  
 Moreover, who gives out so bold  
 As I ; ' and e're these shoes were old ?  
 Yet where's the man, who's ever seen,  
 Or read, or heard about a queen,  
 Who, when, a little month were ended,  
 Wou'd send her high-lows to be mended ?  
 But thus it was—after the burial  
 Of the old king, they were so merry all,  
 Her majesty the quèen declared,  
 That, to mine uncle she'd be married,  
 Even, before the church yard dust  
 Were off her shoes—or she'd be curst.  
 Othello, likewise, I prefer—  
 Not that, it's my best character—  
 I like it well enough, though—but  
 The fact is, that, the man's a smut :  
 But in this part, there is one thing  
 I can't forbear from mentioning ;

'Tis of poor wedded Desdemona—  
 Othello, swore he wou'd not own her—  
 (For he was one of those mad fellows,  
 Making themselves for ever jealous)  
 Because, his aid-de-camp Iago—  
 Than whom, I take it, you may far go,  
 And meet no greater villain—so  
 That, in candour, we shou'd allow  
 His Moorship something of pretence,  
 To justify his mad offence—  
 I say, he wou'd not own her, for  
 That 'snob' Iago swore he saw  
 Her, to her paramour, consign—  
 (Mich Cassio the Florentine)  
 A spotted handkerchief; one does n't  
 Full often, meet with such a present :  
 And, my good masters, it is this  
 I do conjecture, much amiss—  
 A thing, which, we may well suppose  
 Had oft wip'd Desdemona's nose:

Now, had the dame (when she felt wilish)  
 Wish'd to do something at all stylish,  
 Methinks, she, rather, shou'd have got  
*The measurement of Cassio's foot* ;  
 And then, have gone to the best maker,  
 Ordering, that, straightway, he shou'd take a  
 Pair, of the veriest dandy sort  
 To Cassio—and to have paid for 't.

But, without any affectation,  
 I'm Faulconbridge, to admiration—  
 But, here's a text to change, I beg—  
 ' Sir Rob ne'er holp'd to make this leg.'—  
 This is the reading I dispute on ;  
 Say, ' there's a leg to put a *boot* on !'  
 As we wou'd say, in common talking,  
 ' Look, here's a shape for a silk stocking !'  
 But boots, of course, for princes ; and I  
 Dare swear, the young wit was a dandy.  
 Now, Faulconbridge, I pitch on him,  
 Because, he had a well turn'd limb ;

But, as to Glo'ster's part, I took it,  
 Because, 'tis said, his legs were crooked ;  
 For both do manifestly suit  
 To show, the qualities of boot.

Moreover, any I defy  
 As well in farce, as tragedy—  
 That is, in characters, that do  
 Depend upon a boot or shoe:  
 And one part, which, indeed you may  
 Reckon, not quite, the first o' the play ;  
 Yet, let me tell you, which, if cast  
 To a bad actor, wou'd be lost—  
 I mean, the quaint facetious artist,  
 ' *A mender of bad soles,* ' whose part is  
 Contain'd within the tragedy,  
 Of Julius Cæsar's History.

' Why lead ye these about the street ?'

' Why, truly, to wear out their feet.'

But, tell me, which of you have seen  
 My tip top Strumbo, in Locrine ?

There is but very little doubt,  
 This tragedy, our poet wrote  
 To show his high dramatic art  
 Of waggery, in Strumbo's part—  
 Inspir'd, was Shakespear, I believe it,  
 The moment that he did conceive it :  
 Strumbo, throughout, what a display !  
 The ruling Julius of the play !  
 No character were ever nobler,  
 Than that, of this facetious cobler.

Ye Covent managers, with reason,  
 May reckon on a fruitful season :  
 No doubt your theatre will fill,  
 When people come to read your bill :  
 Siddons's Constance, Kemble's Brutus,  
 Will never more be found to suit us :  
 Yes, Kemble, Siddons, ye may go ;  
 Your acting 's vulgar, trifling, low ;  
 A *booted Tom Cat* doth appear—  
 It *boots* ye nothing, to stay here—

Reclaim'd, at length, the taste and age—  
 Hail, to the drama, and the stage!—  
 Yet hold!—I surely make a fuss  
 Uncall'd, about this booted puss—  
 If I remember, in a cram'd  
 Assembly, poor Tom puss was damn'd.—  
 Did they not cry, ' *a-bas ! a-bas !*  
 ' Off! off!' the Marquis Carabas?—  
 Now, I remember't well—'od rot it,  
 That, so soon I shou'd have forgot it.  
 But, masters, as I first was saying—  
 —Again I crave ye for estraying—  
 There are some else, in which, by none,  
 Is Black Ball, though I say't, outdone—  
 Many—if mem'ry I cou'd urge on—  
 Rattan, Guy Fawkes, and Major Sturgeon—  
 Mind this; that, *sine* boots they're nothing—  
 As Falstaff wou'd be without stuffing—  
 As Hamlet's clown, were he not dress'd out  
 In a variety of waistcoat—

Ay, even full as great a sin  
 As, Easter *sine* Harlequin—  
 Or—if the rhyme ye can discern well—  
 A Christmas night, without George Barnwell.

Now, who's the man, who dares to treat  
 With slight, the artist of the feet?  
 I call on lofty tragedy;  
 The subtle wit of comedy;  
 Are ye not known, distinguish'd too,  
 Not by the tunic, but the *shoe*?  
 Own to the one, great Sophocles;  
 To t'other, Aristophanes;  
 For, ye are reckon'd of the first kin  
*Dramatici*, by *sock and buskin*.

Now, hail, ye British Ladies!—for,  
 Although, in all, *sans doute*, ye are—  
 In elegance, in beauty, or  
 In wit—by far superior  
 To other women; if you please  
 From England to Antipodes;

Yet, there is one thing ye excel in,  
 Beyond—beyond all pow'r of telling :  
 Not only, in your winning graces ;  
 Not only, by your pretty faces ;  
 But, in your stylish *boots with laces*,  
 And well turn'd ancles—in this ; credit ye,  
 Ye do surpass the maid *de Medicis*.

But, how is it, so late refining  
 In taste, that, ye are now declining ?  
 For, 'tis not three years since, the trade, he,  
*Crispin*, resign'd to ev'ry lady ;  
 Who, daily, after breakfast, sat down  
 With wax, and awl, and last, a lap stone ;  
 So that, none ever went a raking  
 To routs, not wearing her own making :  
 This was refinement—but, alas !  
 Like other good things, it must pass :  
 Still, hope we, if they make a failure in  
 Shoemaking, they will take to tayloring ;  
 Leather, in shoes, is hard, for stitches—  
 There's softer skin in leather breeches—



But gently—for, I shou'd not wonder  
 But, I have made a pretty blunder—  
 For, it is said, you must combine  
 Taylors, up to the number nine,  
 Before 'tis deem'd fit, that, they can  
 Make, as he ought to be, a man—  
 Now (and indeed I do not doubt it—  
 Not that I know great deal about it—  
 But without any hesitation,  
 I do maintain this firm persuasion)  
 On the contrary from its taking  
 Nine buxom lasses, for the making  
 Of one mere man, I do incline  
 To think, that, one wou'd give you nine :  
 Thus, as nine taylors make a man,  
 And, as 'tis clear, one woman can  
 Make you nine men ; if you will sum 'em,  
 'Tis pretty evident, one woman  
 Can do nine times what, nine are able  
 Of taylors ; which, summ'd by the table,  
 Goes, nine times nine are eighty-one—  
 Thus, you perceive what I have done—

Compar'd, with matchless impudence,  
 Generative omnipotence  
 Of the kind sex, to the ninth fraction  
 Of whose integer, in perfection,  
 Nine times, and more, it cou'd produce—  
 —Here's an odd line—now how the duce  
 Cou'd I have made this paragraph  
 Thus—to conclude it with the first half  
 Of a couplet?—but, 'tis in vain  
 To travel o'er the ground again;  
 For if I shou'd, I might not mend it;  
 So—in this bungle, I must end it.

Now, the Chinese dames cramp their toes  
 off,

By never taking of their shoes off:  
 Small feet they think becoming, so  
 They never suffer them to grow:  
 Surely, that female fashion's blameable  
 That, has a tendency to lame 'em all:  
 And yet, on second thoughts, there may—  
 And second thoughts are best they say—

There may be some advantage, when  
 Considered only, are the men ;  
 The man of ton, or there, or here,  
 May pay his court with little fear ;  
 And wife—howe'er he may forsake her—  
 However jealous he may make her—  
 He has, at least, this good reflection,  
 That, he can run from her detection,  
 If she thought 't worthy to pursue,  
 Throughout his gallantries, Ching Moo :  
 But, it is terribly fatiguing  
 To talk about Chinese intriguing—  
 But, probably, more aptly speaking,  
 'Tis splenetic, and far too *piquing* :  
 In short—the fashion, I'm afraid, is  
 Rather absurd, among the Chinese ladies.

The *shoe* is various, high or low ;  
 Bound with a buckle, or a bow ;  
 'Tis thin, or thick, as you may chance  
 To wish to shoot, or wish to dance ;  
 Of English, or of Spanish leather ;  
 And worn, to keep one from the weather.

In England now, so much is thought  
 From broad St. Giles's, to the court,  
 Of a man's boots ; that, altogether  
 It stamps him who may wear them, whether  
 He be this, or that, or what—  
 And to those, who may not have 'got  
 A very well made, first rate pair,  
 I wou'd advise, that, they be ware  
 How they presume ; for 'tis offence  
 For any man to show pretence,  
 Without this stamp, and mark, that he  
 Be worthy of gentility ;  
 In short—the boots do clearly show  
 Whether, or not, you're of *the go*.

But boots much differ in their kind—  
 The crease before, the seam behind :  
 First, for the *top-boot*—but I wou'd  
 In this, be clearly understood,  
 That, the word, *top*, is not for showing  
 That, this boot is the dandiest going—  
 Because, by no means is it so ; for—  
 —But in good time you will discover—

'Tis call'd top boot, because, it hath  
 A top, which, binds about the calf—  
 But 'tis not ev'ry one wou'd '*hang*  
*A calf skin on his recreant limb*—  
 But its description, I will try it ;  
 And if I fail, why—we'll pass by it.

Top boots (as far as I have knowledge in  
 Their real hist'ry) owe their origin  
 To that, which, the old Spanish Don  
 His legs was wont to pull upon :  
 The sole, or bottom part of it,  
 Was weather proof, and made to fit  
 The foot, in ev'ry shape and manner ;  
 Of a thick bull's skin ; which, the tanner  
 By preparation, dress'd and dri'd,  
 Calling it afterwards, a hide—  
 I say the bottom part was strong,  
 And hard, and fit to walk upon ;  
 But all the other part, which, bound  
 The ancle, and the leg around,  
 Was far more soft, and pliable—  
 And being loose, was liable

To be turn'd over, and to fall  
 From the thick o' the leg, to the small—  
 And that, which, was the lowest setter,  
 Looser, and easier—the better.  
 From this, our jockey boot was taken—  
 —Faith! stare; but I am not mistaken—  
 I say, this was the source, and root  
 Of what, we call our jockey boot;  
 But now, I grant ye, no more like it  
 Than, the grand Cairo, is—to Highgate.  
 Than other boots, now, this boot reaches  
 Much higher; and is worn with breeches—  
*Breeches*—we all know what they are;  
 What men—and faith! what women wear  
 Sometimes—but for those ladies, who  
 Never had any thing ado,  
 With this particular of dress,  
 I will endeavour to express  
 Their use; and for so complicate  
 A thing, I'll be as delicate  
 As I am able—if indeed  
 Any there be, who, may have need

Of such an explanation ; but,  
 On further thought, there's little doubt  
 That ev'ry woman, high or low,  
 Of own experience, doth know  
 What mystery therein may lie—  
 So for the present, I'll pass by  
 The matter ; or you'll ne'er attend,  
 I fear, until I reach the end.  
 Then, to resume my first narration—  
 Unless, tip-toe your expectation,  
 Fair ladies, I have rais'd too much,  
 By this mere accidental touch—  
 Not—as I have observ'd before—  
 Of information, you'd get more  
 Than, that you have ; but chance you may  
 Wish to hear, what I have to say—  
 But, I'm determin'd to go on,  
 Or, God knows when I shall have done.

Now, the *low boot* is wont to pop in  
 Between the trowser, and the stocking ;  
 And made more taper, than the high one ;  
 The heel of which, is tip'd with iron.

*Hessian*, was so call'd, because, wore,  
 And fashion'd by a Hessian corps ;  
 Surmounted by a silken tassel,  
 Such as, Lord Foppinton, Count Cassel,  
 Think, generally, fit to use,  
 To ornament their scenic shoes.  
 So heretofore till now doth carry  
 The name, and style, both, military :  
*Haud aliter*, that, now the ton—  
 Call'd, the *imperial Wellington*.  
 In this, there is a fashion, handy,  
 And most convenient, for that dandy  
 Who, with a scant purse, wou'd be thought  
 Of the correct, and proper sort :  
 A taper spur, or brass, or steel,  
 Is fix'd, with screws, upon the heel ;  
 So that, he have the full pretence,  
 (Without the burden of expense)  
 Of having but to please his fancy,  
 To foot, or horse—though by no chance he  
 E'er wore a stirrup in his day ;  
 Yet, it is hazardous to say,



At the same time, he never wore  
 His *irons* on his feet, before—  
 But, I must beg you'll pardon me  
 For this unfitting *irony*.

But London, London, sing the fame  
 That, is attach'd to such a name,  
 As, I may tell—*Smart, Rymer, Hoby*,  
 In making, give the world the go by  
 Your boots, who can too highly rate 'm?  
 Make them, for ever—*O create 'em!*

What shall e'er recompense the loss  
 Of *Rymer's* art, in Charing Cross?  
 That he, that *Crispin's* chosen pride;  
 Knight errant of the bull's dri'd hide;  
 That man, whom princes deign to sue,  
 When needing of a boot or shoe;  
 That mighty one, whose well wax'd hand  
 Measures the toes of half the land,  
 That ev'ry foot, by his direction,  
 Becomes a model of perfection.

*Smart*, the next champion of the feet,  
 Full as notorious as the street,

In which, he shows his leathern ware  
 So valu'd ; Lisle Street, Leicester Square!!—  
 O regal street, in which, are seen,  
*A Crispin King, and Cyprian Queen !*  
 For great, indeed, must be the fame  
 That, *Smart*, and *Mother Conway* claim !

But *Hoby*, mightie'st of the three ;  
 Their oracle ; their deity ;  
 So far the foremost of the clan,  
 In form alone, they think him man ;  
 And vain his Lordship, as the cit,  
 Who cries, ' *look ye, 'tis Hoby's fit*—  
 And dearly pays, but for the sake  
 Of saying, ' *this is Hoby's make*—  
 So chance you may, when ye shall go  
 To wander in the shades below,  
 See him, among th' Elysian swarm,  
 Imperial Cæsar on his arm.

' But stop—'tis not a just reflection,  
 My talent oft is my affliction'—

Cries, gentle *Hoby*— for I see,  
 I make some men to *walk* so free

And easy, that, they think no fun in  
 That kind of thing ; so, take to *running* :  
 For this, I shou'd not care a crack,  
 If, they wou'd now and then, trot back—  
 But, faith ! they are so light and clever,  
 That, they contrive to *run for ever*—  
 At any rate, they're not so silly,  
 To fix themselves near Piccadilly :  
 Woe be to them, who trust this rash age—  
 I find them merely birds of passage :  
 And yet what race of bird they be  
 I know not ; save they *pigeon* me :  
 Still I've been able to descry  
 Their sure peculiarity :  
 For while, their feet alone, I *leather*,  
 They *hide* themselves—aye, altogether.'

The shoe complete, another thing  
 Of weight comes on, the *polishing*—  
 For best of shoes is nothing, lacking  
 The virtue of a brush and blacking.

Still, hail ye names ! and first of all,  
 On *Day* and *Martin* do I call ;

Great spirits, witnesses ye stand,  
 With brilliant *Warren* in the Strand,  
 How all on us, or small or great,  
 Reflected be : ‘ immoderate  
*Boot polish* swells into a fault’—  
 For, ‘ dogs bark at us as we halt.’  
 Then, let the *martin* to the *day*,  
 Whistle the *black joke’s* roundelay.

When some great man, a nation’s pride,  
 Some far fam’d talent, may have died ;  
 Whose qualities, had made him great,  
 Above all others of the state—  
 Say, is it not our highest views,  
 That, we shou’d *tread within his shoes* ?

We’ve somewhere read, not all the fair  
 Cou’d once a prince’s heart ensnare ;  
 And, long, in vain, did poor and great  
 Essay his heart to captivate ;  
 Nor did that fairest, who, was thought  
 The very jewel of the court,  
 Untill, a fairy did equip her  
 With something very like a *shipper* ;

Then, did her *foot* her charms evince,  
 And *Cinderella* won the prince,  
 So, credit me, next to the face,  
 A pretty foot's a winning grace ;  
 For you'll observe, that, if the feet  
 Be shapen'd well, and ancles neat,  
 It follows, almost, as a matter  
 Of course, that, looking further at her,  
 You'll find the ancle, and the shoe-ties  
 Pointing the way to greater beauties.

Who is there of the sporting train,  
 That hazard on Newmarket plain,  
 But must in honesty confess  
 The boot's the foremost of the dress ?  
 Wisdom, is often in the wig ;  
 But here, 'tis settl'd in the leg :  
 And yet, my masters, ye may doubt  
 The legs are *black* enough without—  
 'Tis thus—and known from certain proof,  
 They're worn to hide the *cloven hoof*.

Oh, happy ! had but Homer made  
 A something of a *Hobyade* ;

For, not the robe imperial,  
 One tittle, is more classical,  
 Than, leathern boots—I do not mean  
 Such dandy boots, as now are seen ;  
 Nor do I think, that, Thetis' son  
 Wore what we call a Wellington ;  
 For sure enough, Achilles had none,  
 Ulysses, nor great Agamemnon,  
 Nor that vain coxcomb, whose delight is  
 To adonize, I mean Thersites ;  
 Still wrong is he, who, e'er disputes  
 The Grecians always fought in boots—  
 For Homer saith, both foot and riders  
 Scour'd down on Troy, Εἰ ΚΝΗΜΙΑΔΕΣ.\*  
 But, sure it needs not much, that, we  
 Shou'd learn the *immortality*  
 Of sole! we ask no second Cato—  
 —But, masters, as 'tis getting late O,  
 I'll say farewell! and take my leave—  
*Boot, sandal, slipper, shoe, and greave:*

And, mayhap, ye wou'd like it better,  
 When next I speak, that, I should get a  
 Full *seu'n leagued pair*, and never bore ye  
 Again, so *slip shod*, through a story.

THE END.























































































































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